

JOAN OF ARC

By
R. B. INCE



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JOAN OF ARC



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JOAN OF ARC

BY

R. B. INCE

AUTHOR OF "MESMER, HIS LIFE AND TEACHING,"

"THE WHITE ROADS," ETC.

"Take all things peacefully ; heed not thine affliction.
Thence thou shalt come at last into the Kingdom of
Paradise."—*The Voices of Joan of Arc.*

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JOAN OF ARC

CHAPTER I

JOAN AT DOMREMY

THE name of Joan of Arc stands high among the mystics of the world. She has been regarded from many standpoints. Rival factions have rallied to her standard and sought to "prove their doctrines orthodox" by a reference to her life and teaching. But, as is always the way with the great mystics, she stands alone, dimly apprehended and shrouded for ever in an aureole of romance and mystery.

Controversy is still kindled at her name. Was she an orthodox saint ; a religious or political fanatic ; a dreamer, self-deceived, or a prophet inspired from on high ; was she a clairvoyant medium or the subject of "unilateral hallucinations" ? All these views have been taken by varying authorities who have written books about her. But the scientific

spirit refuses to be led astray by facile definitions. The complete and final truth concerning the Maid has not yet been stated. Her meteoric career remains one of the most baffling enigmas of European history.

Authorities differ as to the exact date of the Maid's birth. The evidence tends to prove that it was somewhere between the years 1410-1412. According to Perceval de Boulainvilliers she was born on Twelfth Night, January 6th, 1412. Of her early years until she was thirteen little is recorded beyond the fact that she took part in the games and occupations of the children of her village.

Joan's father, Jacques d'Arc, was a prosperous farmer, owner of horses and cattle, and in 1421 headman (doyen) of Domremy. Her mother, Isabelle de Vouthon (called Romée probably in consequence of a pilgrimage to Rome), was a devout Catholic. Joan lived with her parents, helping them in the work of the farm, until she was seventeen.

During the years of her childhood there was much distress in France, distress of which Joan was perforce acutely conscious. The "great pity that was in France" by reason of continual and sporadic warfare was vividly brought home to her. England, France and Burgundy

were engaged in open warfare or political intrigue. The country was being continually ravaged by wandering bands of English, Burgundians, or other enemies to the peace of "le doux pays de France." The Regent Duke of Bedford, as "Governor of France," ruled in the north; the Dauphin, Charles VII, kind and well-intentioned but inefficient, was at the mercy of the courtiers who surrounded him, and the Duke of Burgundy lost no opportunity of playing England against France, and France against England, according as it served his purpose. And, as was to be expected, in the general unrest, the brunt of the suffering fell on the peasants.

In 1419-1420 companies of English and Burgundians prowled through the country, plundering as they went, and Jacques d'Arc and his neighbours were compelled to drive their cattle for safety into an abandoned fortress on an island of the Meuse. This was a frequent occurrence. The people of the villages lived in continual alarm. Sentries were posted on the church towers to watch for the first glitter of lances on the winding roads. At the reported approach of danger the herds were driven into a place of safety.

Those who have sought to prove that Joan

was the orthodox saint of legend have emphasised the perils and alarms in the midst of which she grew up. Sensible of the unrest and suffering that was in France, they assert that she became abnormally devotional and religious.

But the facts do not bear out this view. It is true that she did later become religious. But it was not until her "mission" had been revealed to her by the Voices. The Voices came first, the pensive, devotional attitude to life afterwards.

In the fifteenth century anyone connected with abnormal phenomena ran the risk of being accused of witchcraft. It was not surprising, therefore, that search was made into the early life of the Maid by her enemies for any evidence of a suspicious nature. The Oak Wood (le Bois Chesnu) within half a league of Domremy, was known to be haunted by wolves and believed to be frequented by fairies. The Gospel of St. John was read aloud in the wood on certain days with the view of exorcising the fairy folk. There was a beech near Domremy called "the Fairies' Tree" (l'Arbre-des-Fées), and near it a fountain to which the sick came for healing. On the Sunday in Lent called Laetare Sunday, the boys and girls of the villages used to dance at the Fairy Tree, picnic there, and weave

garlands of flowers to hang on the branches. Joan went with the other little girls and took part in their revels. They were, no doubt, a relic of ancient Celtic tree-worship, tolerated, if not sanctioned, by the Church. At her trial her judges endeavoured to prove that the Maid was a witch because she had, as a child, danced round the Fairy Tree. Such a suggestion was as false as it was ridiculous. Had she been a "witch" on this account then all the children of Domremy were implicated in witchcraft.

These village fairies of pagan origin entered largely into the lives of the peasantry of Lorraine. They were invited to baptisms, and a place at table was laid for them at the feast. They gave good or bad qualities to new-born infants. Some of them were kind, but many were irritable and capricious. If offended, they cast evil spells. They were "the Fates," "the Destinies," and not a little to be feared.

Asked at her trial whether she knew of "those who travel in the air with the fairies," Joan replied that she had heard of them but "did not believe in them." They were merely a part of her childhood which she left behind when her Voices called her to recover the Kingdom of France.

CHAPTER II

THE VOICES

WE have two contemporary accounts of how the Voices came to Joan of Arc. The first occurs in a letter written by Percival de Boulainvilliers, Councillor and King's Chamberlain, to the Duke of Milan, and dated June 21st, 1429. In her thirteenth year, he says, Joan ran a foot race with some of her girl friends who were watching the sheep in the village meadow. The prize was a garland or a bunch of flowers. Joan ran so swiftly and won so easily that in the eyes of onlookers her feet did not appear to touch the ground. One of the girls cried, "Jeanne, I see you flying close to the earth." "When the race was over, and Jeanne, at the limit of the meadow, was, as it were, rapt and distraught" (*rapta et a sensibus alienata*), "resting and recovering herself, there was near her a youth who said, 'Jeanne, go home, for your mother says she needs you.' Believing that it was her brother or some other boy of the neighbourhood, she went home in a hurry.

Her mother scolded her, and asked her why she had come home and left her sheep.

“ ‘Did you not send for me?’ asked the Maid.

“ ‘No,’ said her mother.

“Joan supposed that one of the children had played a trick on her, and was returning, when suddenly a brilliant cloud passed before her eyes, and from the cloud came a voice which said that she must change her course of life, and do marvellous deeds, for the King of Heaven had chosen her to aid the King of France. She must wear man’s dress, take up arms, be a captain in war, and all would be ordered by her advice.”

“The Maid was stupefied and incredulous. Such thoughts had never occurred to her before they were suggested by the Voice. She told them to none save the Curé, although the Voices continued with similar advice during the rest of her girlhood.

Her own account of the coming of the Voices, as given to her judges at her trial, is as follows :

“When I was thirteen years old (or about thirteen) I had a Voice from God, to help me in my conduct. And the first time I was in great fear. It came, that Voice, about mid-day, in summer-time, in my father’s garden. I had not fasted on the previous day. I heard

the Voice from the right side towards the church, and I rarely hear it without seeing a light. The light is on the side from which the Voice comes."

The question of Joan's Voices has given rise to an enormous amount of controversy. The orthodox of her own faith have taken it for granted that her visitants were, as she herself believed, St. Catharine, St. Michael and St. Margaret. "Their heads," she said, "were crowned with fair crowns, richly and preciousy. To speak of this I have had leave from the Lord" (Messire). "I saw them with my bodily eyes. . . . And when they departed I used to weep, and wish that they would take me with them." She distinguished her saints by their naming each other and by their method of salutation. On one occasion St. Michael said to her "St. Catharine and St. Margaret will come to thee. Act according to their advice; for they are appointed to guide thee and counsel thee in all thou hast to do, and thou mayest believe what they shall say unto thee."

Her enemies, for political reasons, asserted without hesitation that the Voices were of the Devil. In the fifteenth century speculation on these matters was impossible. Men were

either "good" or "bad"; abnormal phenomena were either from God or Satan.

Modern theorists have taken many views, according to their philosophy and temperament. M. Anatole France, in his *Life of the Maid*, is, as one would expect, sceptical. In his desire to explain the Voices as the result of fasting and devotional practices, he does violence to the facts. Joan did not fast, and was not devotional *until after the Voices came*. M. France's theory might account for the Voices (though it would throw no fresh light on their nature and origin) were it in conformity with the facts.

Dr. Georges Dumas, of the Sorbonne, a distinguished authority on nervous diseases, when consulted as to the nature and origin of Joan's Voices, gave a mainly negative opinion. While regarding her Voices and visions as proceeding from her subconscious self, he falls back upon the theory that she was "indocinated" by certain militant clerics. This, he thinks, would account for her martial mission and the unswerving determination with which she carried it out. He concludes: "Her hysteria became the open door by which the divine—or what Jeanne deemed the divine—entered into her life. It strengthened

her faith and consecrated her mission ; but in her intellect and in her will Jeanne remains healthy and normal. Nervous pathology can therefore cast but a feeble light on Jeanne's nature." This inability on the part of "nervous pathology" is hardly surprising. There are a great many phenomena connected with their own subject on which nervous pathologists are incompetent to give an opinion.

Mr. F. W. H. Myers, in his *Human Personality*, propounds his hypothesis of the Subliminal Self. The case of Joan of Arc is, in his opinion, an illustration of this theory. All-conscious Mind is, according to Myers, free from conditions of space and time ; and with that Mind the human agent is occasionally in touch more or less imperfect. The results of this rapport are, among others, telepathy, precognition, clairvoyance and clairsaudience. This view, according to his theory, does not, however, preclude the intervention of extraneous spirits.

CHAPTER III

VAUCOULEURS AND FIERBOIS

ROBERT DE BAUDRICOURT, Captain of Vaucouleurs—a walled town held for the Dauphin, some twelve miles distant from Domremy—was a friend of Jacques d'Arc. In the spring of 1427, Joan's father, in the interest of the villagers of Domremy, had personal dealings with him.

Baudricourt was a blunt soldier, with a rather coarse sense of humour and a complete incapacity for fine enthusiasms. To this man Joan determined to appeal for help in carrying out her mission.

She had a kinsman, Durand Lassois, living at Burey-en-Vaulx, a hamlet five miles from Domremy and less than two and a half from Vaucouleurs. With feminine subtlety Joan suggested that Lassois should invite her to attend his wife during her confinement. Lassois agreed and brought her from Domremy to his house at Burey.

Accompanied by Lassois, Joan visited

Baudricourt and suggested that he should send her to the Dauphin without delay. She told him that by God's will she herself would lead the Dauphin to be crowned. As was to be expected, Baudricourt's reply was a jesting refusal. "Take her back to her father," he advised Lassois, "and box her ears well."

Nevertheless, the following year Joan persuaded Baudricourt to reverse his decision. How did she accomplish this? There is some confusion among the authorities. In the contemporary *Chronique de Cousinot* we read that on February 12th, 1429, Joan went to Baudricourt and said, "In God's name you are too slow in sending me; for this day, near Orleans, a great disaster has befallen the gentle Dauphin, and worse fortune he will have unless you send me to him." The Captain learned later that the day of Joan's revelation was the day when the Constable of Scotland and the Seigneur d'Orval were defeated by the English in the Battle of the Herrings, at Rouvray, near Orleans. If this happened as related by Cousinot we have an excellent reason for Baudricourt's change of mind. The Maid, in modern phrase, was gifted with clairvoyant powers. To Baudricourt she would appear to be inspired either by God or the Evil One.

Another occurrence which lends probability to this display of clairvoyance in the presence of Baudricourt took place shortly afterwards. Joan's hostess at Vaucouleurs, Madame Royer (a friend of the Lassois'), was sitting at home with the Maid when Baudricourt entered, accompanied by Fournier, the Curé. Madame Royer withdrew, but learned afterwards, from Joan, what occurred. The priest put on his stole and exorcised the Maid, saying, "If thou be a thing of evil, begone from us ; if a thing of good, approach us."

Joan dragged herself on her knees to the priest. Obviously the Devil was not in her. Nevertheless she was exceedingly annoyed. "This act," she told Madame Royer, "was ill done for the priest, for he had heard me in confession." But why did the matter-of-fact Baudricourt have recourse to such methods unless something had arisen to trouble his mind concerning the Maid ?

Notwithstanding the success of the exorcism, Baudricourt did little to assist the Maid, when at length he permitted her to set out for Chinon where the Dauphin was. The expenses of the journey were defrayed by two friends of the d'Arc family, Jean de Metz and Bertrand de Poulengy, who accompanied her.

They travelled by night, for the roads were infested by bandits and marauding companies of Burgundians and English. When they reached Fierbois, a little town near Chinon, south of the Loire, the Maid dictated a letter to the Dauphin, asking permission to enter Chinon.

Fierbois afterwards became intimately connected with the Maid. It was here, the chroniclers say, that she got her mystic sword. There was a famous chapel at Fierbois dedicated to St. Catharine ; and St. Catharine of Fierbois had become the patron saint of captives taken by the English and Burgundians. Many miracles were related to have been performed at this shrine. In 1431 the Maid told her judges, " While I was at Tours or Chinon, I sent to seek for a sword in the church of St. Catharine of Fierbois, behind the altar ; and presently it was found, all rusty." They asked how she knew the sword was there, and she replied,

" It was a rusty sword in the earth, with five crosses on it, and I knew of it through my Voices. I had never seen the man who went to look for it. I wrote to the churchmen of Fierbois and asked them to let me have it, and they sent it. It was not deep in the earth, it was behind the altar as I think. . . . When it was found, the

clergy rubbed it, and the rust readily fell off. The man who brought it was a merchant of Tours who sold armour. The clergy of Fierbois gave me a sheath; the people of Tours gave me two, one of red velvet, one of cloth of gold, but I had a strong leather sheath made for it."

From Fierbois Joan rode to Chinon, and, after breakfasting at a hostelry, went to the castle. She was not immediately admitted. The Dauphin did not appear to know anything about her. Probably her letter from Fierbois and Baudricourt's letter from Vaucouleurs had been kept back by his advisers. The Council was divided in opinion as to whether she should be admitted or not. But after a short deliberation an appointment was made.

Certain ecclesiastics attached to the Court interrogated Joan and asked wherefore she had come. At first she refused to say anything save to the Dauphin. But when the clerks explained that they acted in the King's name, she told them the King of Heaven had bidden her do two things: raise the siege of Orleans, and lead the King to Reims for his coronation.

Two days after her arrival she was taken to the Dauphin.

CHAPTER IV

THE KING'S SECRET

THE Dauphin was not one to be carried away by romantic enthusiasm. By nature he was a dawdler and a doubter. He was content to put off till to-morrow whatever duties appeared irksome to-day. Therefore his belief in the Maid and his acceptance of her at her own valuation has led to no little discussion and much perplexity among historians.

Did Joan give "a sign" to convince the Dauphin of the authenticity of her mission, and, if so, what was that sign?

Alain Chartier, the poet, writing of Joan in July 1429, says, "As to what she said to the King, nobody knows that. But it was manifest that the King was greatly encouraged, as if by the Spirit."

Thomas Basin, Bishop of Lisieux, in his *History of Charles VII*, states that "the Count de Dunois, who was most intimate with the King, told me the facts on the King's own authority. The Maid confirmed her account

by rehearsing to the King matters so secret and hidden that no mortal except himself could know them save by divine revelation."

The substance of this secret was slow in coming to light. In contemporary letters there are ten reports stating vaguely that the Maid told the Dauphin certain secret things which appeared to fill him with confidence and joy.

Two later chronicles (written somewhere about 1468) assert that the secret referred to something personal to the Dauphin, known to no one save himself—"A vow which he had made"; "something great which he had done"; "a thing that none could know save God and himself." At her trial Joan admitted that she had given him a sign "connected with his own doings."

It was not until 1516, when the *Hardiesses des Grands Rois*, by Pierre Sala, was published, that details of the Maid's message were given. Sala, a servant of Charles VIII, became familiar with de Boisy, who had been a Gentleman of the Bedchamber to Charles VII. To de Boisy the King communicated the secret which the Maid revealed. In 1428, when greatly troubled in mind as to whether he was the rightful heir or not, he went into his oratory

and made a mental prayer, “ uttering no words, but in his heart imploring God that, if he were indeed the true heir, of the blood of the noble House of France, and the Kingdom rightfully his own, God would please to guard and defend him ; or at least grant him grace to avoid death or captivity, and escape to Spain or Scotland, whose kings were from ancient times brothers in arms, and allies of the Kings of France ; wherefore he had chosen them as his last refuge.”

This was the prayer which the Maid recalled to the mind of Charles VII in fulfilment of the promise her Voices gave her that she should receive a sign which would convince the King.

During his reign the secret could not be made public since it proved that Charles entertained doubts of his legitimacy. The Maid herself throughout her life was silent concerning it, and even at her trial neither the threat of torture nor the sight of the rack could wring it from her.

But though Charles was startled and troubled by this message he does not appear to have been immediately convinced by it. Public opinion also had to be considered. It was necessary, therefore, that the learned men of the realm should make a pronouncement concerning the

Maid. For this reason Joan was sent to Poitiers, the chief University town. Here certain learned lawyers and divines were instructed to examine her in "celestial science."

Séguin, Professor of Theology, was sent by the Archbishop of Reims to interrogate the Maid; other University professors assisted. Professor Jean Lambert asked her what made her come to the King. She answered that a Voice came to her while she was herding her flock, and told her that God had great pity on the people of France, and that she must needs go into France.

Professor Séguin then asked, "What language does the Voice speak?" The absurdity of this question broke down even Joan's politeness. Her contempt for theologians was very obvious in her swift retort, "The Voice speaks a better language than yours." (The learned Professor was a Limousin, and spoke in the drawling patois that was a common topic of ridicule.)

The learned doctors would like to have seen a miracle, though they might not have believed in it. But the Maid was in no mood for miracles or signs.

"In God's name," she cried impatiently, "I did not come to Poitiers to work miracles.

Take me to Orleans and I will show you the signs of my sending ; give me few men or many, and I go." She then made four predictions, two of which she herself saw fulfilled. She would drive the English from before Orleans ; the Dauphin would be crowned at Reims ; Paris would come under his allegiance ; and the Duc d'Orleans would return from his captivity in England.

The report of the examiners was exactly what was to be expected from such an assembly. The King, they said, should not reject the Maid, nor ought he lightly to believe in her. But, in view of her urgent request that she should be sent to Orleans, "the King should not hinder her from going to Orleans with men-at-arms, but should send her there in due state, trusting in God." The impression conveyed by their report is that they did not think she was from God, yet they were afraid to assert publicly that she was not. In short, "celestial science" was not competent to formulate any theory whatever concerning her.

CHAPTER V

ORLEANS

IN the spring of 1429 Orleans was closely invested by the English. Talbot with some 2,500 men was continually harassing the garrison, and the citizens were frequently short of food. The French were demoralised, and went in continual fear of the English ; their terrifying cry of " Hurrah ! " as they charged was far more useful to them than guns and field instruments.

But the arrival of the Maid speedily changed the fortunes of war. " I bring you," she said to Dunois, " better rescue than ever came to knight or town, the succour of the King of Heaven."

She entered Orleans by night on April 29th. Multitudes came out to greet her. She rode, splendidly mounted, at the right hand of Dunois, and attended by troops of torch-bearers. And the townsfolk made such joy

" as if they saw God descending among them ; and not without reason, for they had suffered

sorely and, what is worse, had little hope of succour, but feared to lose their lives and goods. But now they were comforted as if they saw the siege already raised. . . . Lovingly they gazed on her—men, women and little children. And there was marvellous pressing to touch her as she rode, so much that a torch-bearer came so near her standard that it caught fire. Then she struck the spurs into her horse, and lightly she turned him on the standard, and crushed out the flame as one might do that had long followed the wars.”

With her coming there was a three or four days’ pause in the fighting. She refused to take part in the war until she had summoned the English to depart in peace. She dictated a letter addressing the King of England, Suffolk, Talbot and Scales. They were to restore to the Maid the keys of the good French towns which they occupied and despoiled. She also addressed the English men-at-arms, gentle and simple, and bade them depart from Orleans at their instant peril. In the event of disobedience they were to be driven out of France. “Charles is true heir ; God wills it. And he will enter Paris in good company.”

On May 7th, at sunrise, Joan heard Mass. A sea-trout was brought to her for breakfast, whereon the Maid said to her host, Boucher,

“Keep it for supper ; for I will bring you a Godam later.”

The “Godams” occupied two forts across the river, the Tourelles (part of a broken bridge) standing in the river, and the Boulevard des Tourelles. A wooden bridge connected them.

Within these forts were 600 English yeomen under Poynings, Glasdale, Gifford and other leaders. Their position was strong ; they believed themselves to be superior to their French adversaries, and they had no thought of surrender.

The attack on the forts began early in the morning, and continued throughout the day without any advantage being gained by either side. The English fought desperately with bow-shot and gun-shot, with axes, lances, bills and leaden maces. Scaling-ladders were set up and hurled down, and many of the besiegers were dashed into the fosse.

Joan was early wounded. A bolt pierced her shoulder-plate as she was climbing the first scaling-ladder, and the point passed through armour and body, standing out a hand's breadth behind. She shrank and wept. It was customary to have wounds charmed by songs of healing. This she refused. She

suffered her wound to be dressed with olive oil, and soon returned to the fight, which continued till the eighth hour of the evening.

As dusk was falling she mounted her horse and went alone into a vineyard, where she remained a few minutes in prayer. Then she returned, took her standard into her hands and planted it on the edge of the fosse.

From that moment the fortune of the day changed. The French trumpets had actually sounded the retreat when the men-at-arms saw the Maid's flag under the wall. Dunois, at Joan's request, countermanded the order to retreat. Then followed a last desperate attack upon the fort. Never in any battle was a woman's will more potent. Her determination became suddenly the determination of the French army. Heedless of arrows and bullets the multitudes swarmed up the walls.

The English, taken at last by surprise, had no time to load the guns; bolts and arrows were expended. Stones were used; hand-to-hand encounters became general; the yeomen thrust with lances and hacked with bills, and then suddenly the English turned, fled to the drawbridge and crossed to the stone fortress in the river.

It was their only chance of safety, but it

failed them. The people of Orleans had come out in the deepening twilight with fireships. These they suddenly lighted. In a moment the bridge was in a blaze.

Glasdale, de Moleyns and other English knights sought to hold the drawbridge and thus protect the retreat. Joan saw their peril, and her chivalrous soul was moved to pity for Glasdale, who had threatened and insulted her.

“Glasdale!” she cried, “Glasdale! Yield thee, yield thee to the King of Heaven. You called me harlot, but I have great pity on your soul and the souls of your company.”

But there was no hope for the brave defenders of the burning bridge. It broke beneath their weight. They fell into the stream, and their heavy armour dragged them down. Joan looked on at this last horror of fire and sword, weeping and praying for the souls of her enemies. Her prophecy was fulfilled. Her greatest blow at the invader was struck.

CHAPTER VI

THE BATTLE OF PATAY

AFTER the defeat of the English at Orleans other victories followed in rapid succession. Jargeau was taken (June 12th). The English garrison at Beaugency capitulated (June 17th). It was obvious that the English were demoralised : Fastolf and Talbot were considering the advisability of a hasty retreat.

In a letter written by Guy de Laval to his mother we have a lively description of the Maid as she appeared after her victory at Orleans.

De Laval had ridden from St. Catharine de Fierbois to Loches in the cause of the Dauphin. At Selles, in Berry, he was welcomed by the Maid in her rooms. " She sent for wine and told me that she would soon make me drink wine in Paris. To see her and hear her speak, she seems a thing wholly divine."

Soon afterwards she left for Romorantin with de Boussac and a company of men-at-arms.

“ I saw her mount, all in white armour, but unhelmeted,” writes Guy de Laval, “ a small steel battle-axe in her hand. She had a great black horse, which plunged at the door of her house, and would not permit her to mount. ‘ Lead him to the cross,’ she cried ; ‘ it stands in the road, in front of the church.’ There he stood as fast as if he were bound with cords, and she mounted, and, turning towards the church gate, she said in a sweet womanly voice, ‘ Ye priests and churchmen, go in procession and pray to God.’ Then ‘ Forward ! Forward ! ’ she cried, a gracious page bearing her standard displayed, and she with a little spearth in her hand.”

Joan’s greatest victory after the defeat of the English at Orleans was the famous Battle of Patay.

This is one of the many battles that appear to have been won “ by chance.” The English, after the fall of Beaugency, evacuated Meun and began to march towards Paris. The country through which they passed was the wooded plain of the Beauce. The French army had no certain knowledge of where the English were. The leaders consulted the Maid as to what was to be done.

“ Ride boldly on,” was her advice ; “ you will have good guidance.”

To d'Alençon's question as to what they were to do, she replied, "Have good spurs."

"What, are we to turn our backs?" he asked in astonishment.

"No, but the English will not defend themselves, and you will need good spurs to follow them." She predicted for the Dauphin the greatest victory that he had won for many a day. Scouts were sent out to the number of 70 or 80, mounted on "the flower of chargers."

When within a league of Patay some English scouts caught sight of a large French force advancing. They were not seen by the French. Other scouts brought the same news. Talbot determined, therefore, to make a stand. He decided to line up with 500 picked archers along two strong hedges. By this means he hoped to hold the pass until his rearguard joined him.

But it happened that the French scouts, riding furiously and not knowing where the English were, started a stag from a wood; the stag rushed into the main body of the English, and, not suspecting the nearness of the French, the men-at-arms raised their view-halloo. Their sporting instinct immediately betrayed them. The French scouts drew bridle and sent back the message "Found." Without

loss of time the French cavalry of La Hire formed up and charged with such impetus through the pass which Talbot was lining with his archers, that they cut them up before they could draw bow or loose shaft.

Fastolf arrived soon afterwards with the main body of cavalry. And his force was mistaken by the discomfited English for French reinforcements, with the result that they galloped in wild disorder towards the Paris road. The rout was complete. Dunois reckoned that the English lost more than 4,000 in killed and prisoners. A great part of Fastolf's force was "missing." Talbot was taken prisoner.

The part played by Joan at the Battle of Patay is uncertain. She probably arrived with the main body of the French when the pursuit was over. Her page says: "She was most pitiful at the sight of so great slaughter. A Frenchman was leading some English prisoners; he struck one of them on the head; the man fell senseless. Joan sprang from the saddle and held the Englishman's head in her lap, comforting him, and he was shriven."

Despite these victories of the Maid, the Dauphin tarried. The people of Orleans expected that he would make their town the base

of the expedition to Reims. They decorated the streets, but he did not come. He remained at Sully, the guest of fat and cunning La Trémoille. He praised the Maid loudly; expressed wonder and delight at the work she had accomplished, and then suggested that she should take a rest.

Yet she never wavered in her determination to conduct the most inefficient and indolent of kings to Reims, and crown him there.

At Gien, on the Loire, the Dauphin held "long and weary councils." The expedition to Reims presented difficulties. Many of the towns on the way owed allegiance to Burgundy. They were strongly fortified and might offer stout resistance.

"I know all that," replied Joan to all such objections, "and make no account of it." And in vexation of spirit she quitted the town and bivouacked two days in the fields.

CHAPTER VII

THE MYSTERY OF THE CROWN

THE history of the ride to Reims serves but as one more illustration of the vacillation of the Dauphin and his advisers and the determination of the Maid. Auxerre, Troyes, Reims, would never have suffered the Dauphin to enter their gates without a struggle had it not been for the presence of Joan in the army and the resolution with which she swept away all obstacles. On July 5th the burgesses of Troyes assured the burgesses of Reims that they had "sworn on the precious body of Jesus Christ to resist to the death." Yet on July 9th the King entered Troyes in triumph. Joan's threat to take the town by storm was too much for the blustering burgesses. They preferred to risk burning in the next world for breaking an oath rather than burn in this for keeping one.

On July 17th, 1429, the King was crowned in the Cathedral of Reims. The ceremony began at nine o'clock in the morning. It is

described in a contemporary letter written by Pierre de Beauvais to the Queen of Sicily. "A right fair thing it was to see that fair mystery, for it was as solemn and as well adorned with all things thereto pertaining as if it had been ordered a year before." The coronation oath was administered by the Archbishop of Reims. When he had crowned and anointed the King, all the people cried "Noel!" "And the trumpets sounded so that you might think the roofs would be rent. And always during that mystery the Maid stood next the King, her standard in her hand. A right fair thing it was to see the goodly manners of the King and the Maid." When the Dauphin had been crowned and consecrated, the Maid knelt at his feet and embraced his knees, weeping for joy. "Gentle King," she said, "now is accomplished the will of God, who decreed that I should raise the siege of Orleans and bring you to this city of Reims to receive your solemn sacring, thereby showing that you are the true King, and that France should be yours."

In this, the supreme accomplishment of her short life, Joan stands forth as no ordinary visionary. It is the privilege of all visionaries to dream dreams; it is given only to the greatest to bring their dreams to fulfilment.

Nowhere had she received assistance from without. The Dauphin was lacking in ambition, determination and courage. His advisers were, for the most part, men of little faith but unbounded avarice. The churchmen who came in touch with her were, with one or two exceptions, ignorant, bigoted and incapable of generous enthusiasm. Many of them were jealous of her and eager to seize any opportunity of casting doubt on the authenticity of her visions. Yet with a faith that never faltered she went forward into the dim and (for her) disastrous future. The King was crowned, and henceforth the English must give up their cherished dream of crowning their own child-King at Reims. The Kingdom of France was saved.

At her trial Joan was closely questioned by her judges concerning the crown used at the coronation. From this a legend has grown up which is reflected in the pages of some modern historians, notably in the history of M. Anatole France. M. France, who is unable to see in Joan anything more than the vague, ecclesiastically instructed dreamer and tool of the Church, says: "In one of her dreams Joan had seen herself giving a splendid crown to her King; she

expected to see this crown brought into the church."

There is nothing to bear out such a view in the authorities. The facts concerning this mysterious crown appear to be these :

During the Maid's examination before her judges in March 1431, vigorous efforts were made to extract from her "the King's secret," the sign given to the King at Chinon in 1429. She refused. "Go and ask him," was her brusque reply. But they returned again and again to the subject of the crown. They believed that this crown was, in some way, connected with the secret sign given to the Dauphin. "Had your King a crown when he was at Reims ?" they asked.

"As I believe," the Maid answered, "the King gladly received the crown which he found at Reims, but later a very rich crown was brought to him. And he accepted this (i.e. the inferior crown) so as to hasten his business, and at the request of the people of the town, who wished to avoid the burden of providing for the army." (Charles was crowned in haste, on July 17th, the day after his arrival at Reims.) "And if he had waited," added Joan, "he would have had a crown a thousandfold richer."

Was there anything symbolical or mystic in the Maid's replies on this subject? Some have professed to think so. Probably her judges thought so. But if the learned theologians who examined her scented an allegory, she was quite content that they should. Her object was to draw attention away from the "King's secret." As the instrument of England, they were hostile to Charles VII, and she was determined that they should know nothing of his secret misgivings concerning his legitimacy. Young as she was, and unlearned, she was capable of throwing dust in the eyes of ecclesiastics when it suited her purpose.

In an Italian news letter of July 1429, there is a passage which throws light on the problem of the crown. The Maid, it is there stated, dictated a letter demanding from the Archbishop of Reims (then Bishop of Clermont) the crown of St. Louis, which, she said, was in his possession. The Bishop took no notice. Again she demanded the crown, and again her request was ignored. A third time she wrote describing the precise form and fashion of the crown. Thereupon the Bishop, for reasons of fear or policy, "ordered the crown to be sent to the King and the Maid."

Did the Maid, instructed by her Voices, detect the Bishop, known to be avaricious and crafty, in an attempted fraud? Though the circumstances are vague and capable of many constructions, there is much to bear out such a theory.

CHAPTER VIII

JOAN AND FRIAR RICHARD

IN April 1429 there was preaching in Paris a certain Friar Richard. He was a popular preacher of the sensational and frothy type. On April 16th he preached his first sermon at Sainte Genéviève ; on the next and following days he preached every morning in the open air, on a platform erected against the charnel-house of the Innocents. Around the platform crowded five or six thousand people, eager to hear about the coming of Antichrist and the End of the World.

Friar Richard's eloquence was chiefly directed against the playing of games of chance, to which Parisians were at that time much addicted. Terrified by his thunder, the citizens threw into the streets their gaming-tables, billiard-cues and balls, cards, draught-boards, dice and dice-boxes, and made bonfires of them before their doors. Women burnt their head-dresses, ornaments, hoods and trinkets.

During the ride to Reims, Joan came into conflict with Friar Richard. It has been suggested by some historians that he used the Maid as a pawn in his own game. The suggestion is grotesque and ridiculous. Friar Richard was a fool and a hot-head. Joan was not one to be used as a pawn in any man's game. She read character swiftly; and she knew with perfect definiteness what her objective was and went straight towards it. She was loyal to the Church, but not submissively so. Her contempt for hair-splitting theologians and fussy ecclesiastics was demonstrated very clearly, as we have seen, at Poitiers and later at her trial.

Friar Richard was eager to earn a reputation for mysticism and prophecy. In December 1428 he had urged the people of Troyes and the surrounding district to grow beans. "Sow beans, good people, sow plenty of beans; for he who should come is coming, and the hour is short." He was not very explicit as to who was coming. Was it Antichrist, or the Maid, or the Devil, or the Dauphin?

Beans, as Friar Richard knew, have from the earliest times had a mystic significance. But the literal-minded people of Troyes, terrified by his thunder, acted on his advice, and in

the spring the country round Troyes became fragrant with bean flowers.

The citizens of Troyes, greatly excited by Friar Richard's "revival," at first deemed the Maid a fiend. They therefore despatched Friar Richard, at the first intimation of her approach, to exorcise her. He met her at Saint-Phal and, making the sign of the cross, threw holy water at her. She had grown accustomed to this kind of reception from priests and friars. "Take heart and come on!" she cried when she saw what he was about, "I shall not fly away."

Friar Richard thereupon knelt before the Maid, and Joan, not to be outdone in humility, knelt with him.

The Friar, returning to Troyes, preached with more enthusiasm than intelligence. The Maid, he assured them, could easily lift all the army over the walls or bring them in "in any other manner that pleased her."

We do not learn that on any occasion Joan acted on the advice of Friar Richard. She did not confide in him; she was perfectly aware of his vanity and zeal in the cause of self-advertisement.

Her attitude towards him is exemplified in

her treatment of Catherine de la Rochelle, a protégée of his.

Catherine de la Rochelle was a visionary. She asserted that a lady in white and gold appeared to her, who bade her procure heralds from the King, and trumpeters, and go demanding gold from the good towns. She had, she said, the gift of finding hidden treasure.

Meeting Joan at Montfauçon, in Berry, she said to her :

“ There came to me a White Lady attired in cloth of gold, who said to me : ‘ Go thou through the good towns and let the King give unto thee heralds and trumpets to cry : “ Whosoever has gold, silver or hidden treasure, let him bring it forth instantly.” ’ And she added, ‘ Such as have hidden treasure and do not thus, I shall know their treasure, and I shall go and find it.’ ”

Joan distrusted her and gave her a piece of practical counsel : “ Go back to your husband, look after your household, and feed your children.”

But Catherine preferred to go forth with her heralds and trumpeters. Joan asked if the White Lady came every night. Being told that she did, “ I will sleep with you,” she said.

When night came she retired to rest with

Catherine, watched till midnight, saw nothing, and fell asleep. In the morning, directly she awoke, she asked, "Did she come?"

"She did," replied Catherine. "But you were asleep and I did not like to wake you."

"Will she come to-morrow?"

Catherine assured her that she would.

This time Joan was determined to keep awake, so she took the precaution of going to sleep in the daytime. Often during the night she asked, "Will she not come?" And Catherine replied, "Yes, directly."

But Joan saw nothing.

When her Saints next came to her, Joan questioned them concerning this White Lady, and asked them what she was to think of her.

"This Catherine," they replied, "is naught but futility and folly."

Did Joan "smell a rival" in Catherine de la Rochelle, as some have insinuated? There is nothing to lead us to form such an opinion. The two were widely separated in purpose and character. Joan's one object was to expel the English by force of arms. She had no sympathy with Catherine's love of display and belief in material aids.

CHAPTER IX

THE CAPTURE OF THE MAID

“JOAN,” asked the Archbishop of Reims, “in what place do you expect to die ? ”

“Where God pleases,” was her reply. “I know not the hour or the place more than you know. And would that it were God’s pleasure that I might now lay down my arms and go back to serve my father and mother, in keeping their sheep, with my sister and my brothers that would be right glad to see me.”

The King had been crowned, but unfortunately the anointing with holy oil did not change his nature. Shortly after that ceremony he was intriguing again with Burgundy. Always he was disinclined to fight, and always he played with the hope of buying off the Duke of Burgundy. The policy of Burgundy was to balance England against France and extend his own territories. La Trémoille, the most powerful man in the kingdom, cared for nothing so long as he could keep his ascendancy over Charles. And among these Court intrigues we

find the strange figure of this girl of seventeen, sustained always by the presence of her Saints, and working with indomitable will, her heart and mind fixed upon one purpose—the expulsion of the English. It is a position unique in the history of mysticism.

That the Maid had a very wide reputation in the realm of France at this period is evident from many contemporary witnesses. Most striking amongst these is the letter she received from the Count d'Armagnac concerning the three popes.

King Alphonso of Aragon had been excommunicated by Pope Martin V. The reason for this excommunication was political. Martin had supported against Alphonso the rights of Louis of Anjou to the Kingdom of Naples. Thereupon the King of Aragon opposed to Martin a pontiff of his own choosing. The antipope thus appointed was a canon of Barcelona, who assumed the title of Clement VIII, and carried on the tradition of the former antipope Benedict XIII. There was a third claimant to the Holy See, Benedict XIV, who had been nominated by a cardinal created by Benedict XIII. The Count d'Armagnac joined the King of Aragon's party, and was excommunicated with him in 1429. For six

months he had been deprived of the sacraments and involved in many secular difficulties in consequence. When King Alphonso gave in and called upon Clement VIII to resign, the Count d'Armagnac was in a difficulty. He desired to make his peace with Martin, but wished at the same time to make his submission appear honourable and reasonable. He therefore hit upon the expedient of writing to the Maid. His letter, of which the following is a translation, was received by her on August 22nd, as she was about to spring into the saddle.

“MY VERY DEAR LADY, I commend myself humbly to you, and I entreat you, for God's sake, that seeing the divisions which are in the holy Church Universal, concerning the question of the popes (for there are three contending for the papacy : one dwells at Rome, and calls himself Martin V, whom all Christian kings obey ; the other dwells at Peniscola, in the Kingdom of Valentia, and calls himself Clement VIII ; the third dwells no man knows where, unless it be the Cardinal de Saint-Estienne and a few folk with him, and calls himself Pope Benedict XIV. The first, who is called Pope Martin, was elected at Constance by consent of all Christian nations ; he who is called Clement was elected at Peniscola, after the death of Pope Benedict XIII, by three of

his Cardinals ; the third, who is called Pope Benedict XIV, was elected secretly at Peniscola, by that same Cardinal Saint-Estienne himself. I pray you beseech our Lord Jesus Christ that in His infinite mercy He declare unto us through you which of the three aforesaid is the true Pope and whom it shall be His pleasure that we henceforth obey, him who is called Martin, or him who is called Clement, or him who is called Benedict ; and in whom we should believe, either in secret or under reservation, or by public pronouncement ; for we shall all be ready to work the will and the pleasure of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“ Yours in all things,

“ COUNT D’ARMAGNAC.”

To this letter the Maid hastily dictated the following reply :

“ Jesus ✠ Maria. ,

“ Count of Armagnac, my good friend and beloved, Joan the Maid lets you to wit that your message hath come before me, the which hath told me that you have sent from where you are to know from me in which of the three popes, whom you mention in your memorial, you ought to believe. This thing in sooth I cannot tell you truly for the present, until I be in Paris or at rest elsewhere, because for the present I am too much hindered by affairs of

war ; but when you hear that I am in Paris send a message to me, and I will give you to understand what you shall rightfully believe, and what I shall know by the counsel of my Righteous and Sovereign Lord, the King of all the world, and what you should do, as far as I may. To God I commend you ; God keep you. Written at Compiègne, the 22nd of August."

In sending this letter Joan made a slip which her enemies used against her at her trial. They argued that the Church knew which was the true pope, and that it was an act of presumption on her part to seek to interpret the will of Heaven.

The Maid now fixed her quarters at St. Denys, but the King departed to Senlis. In the matter of the attack on Paris he was more than half-hearted. "It seemed that he was advised against the Maid and the Duc d'Alençon and their company." Bedford withdrew from the city, leaving it in Burgundian hands. Charles hoped to make peace with Burgundy, and with this object entered into an armistice on August 18th, yet he did not forbid the Maid to attack Paris.

The assault on Paris failed as it was doomed to fail.

Clement de Fauquemberque, clerk of the

Parlement de Paris under the English Government, wrote the following account of the attack, which agrees with that of the Maid :

“ On Thursday, September 8th, the Feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God, the soldiers of Messire Charles de Valois assembled in great numbers near the walls of Paris, at the Porte St. Honoré, rather hoping by a popular tumult to oppress and injure the town and the inhabitants than to succeed by force of arms. About two hours after noon they began to make a semblance of an intention to assail the place. Hastily did some of the enemy at the swine-market and near the gate bring up bundles of wood and faggots, and throw them into the outer trenches, which were dry ; next into the ditches close to the walls, where the water was high. At this moment the disaffected or bribed people in the town raised shouts throughout the whole place on either side of the bridges, yelling that ‘ all is lost, the enemy has entered,’ with cries of ‘ Sauve qui peut.’ Thereupon all the people in the churches at sermon were panic-stricken, and most of them fled to their houses and shut the doors. . . . Those who were appointed to that duty stayed on guard on the walls and at the gates, and, others coming up, made good and strong opposition to the men of Charles of Valois, who remained in the outer fosse. And without, at the swine-

market, till ten or eleven o'clock, when they departed with loss, several being slain or wounded by gun-shot and arrow-shot. Among others a woman called the Pucelle, who was one of the leaders for Charles of Valois, was wounded in the leg by an arrow."

Even the courage and determination of the Maid were powerless in face of the vacillation and incompetence of the leaders. She was placed under cover beside the moat, "whence long after nightfall she kept crying on her men to the charge."

But the turn in the tide of her fortunes had come. "As I was on the ramparts of Melun," she told her judges, "St. Catharine and St. Margaret warned me that I should be captured before Midsummer Day; that so it must needs be; nor must I be afraid and astounded; but take all things well, for God would help me. So they spoke, almost every day. And I prayed that when I was taken I might die in that hour, without wretchedness of long captivity; but the Voices said that so it must be. Often I asked the hour, which they told me not; had I known the hour I would not have gone into battle."

The hour of her capture at Compiègne was at hand.

Compiègne was a town rivalling Orleans in its strength and strategical importance. It commanded the passage of the Oise and the route to Paris. For this reason the Duke of Burgundy coveted it. The object of the Anglo-Burgundian campaign of 1430 was therefore to capture Compiègne and thus to gain command of the Ile de France and relieve Paris.

The French objective was to hold Compiègne and cut the Burgundian communications south of the Oise. In accordance with this plan the Maid entered Compiègne on May 13th. Here she was joined by the Archbishop of Reims and the Comte de Vendôme. The garrison of Compiègne was under the command of Guillaume de Flavy.

There were some indecisive skirmishes in which the Maid took part, but nothing of importance occurred until May 23rd.

On the farther bank of the river, opposite Compiègne, were three Burgundian outposts—Clairoix, Margny and Venette. Clairoix was held by the veteran Jean de Luxembourg, Comte de Ligny. At Margny, facing Compiègne, was a small Burgundian force under Baudot de Noyelles. Venette, some two miles down the river, was the English headquarters under Montgomery.

At five o'clock, on May 23rd, the Maid, with 400 to 500 men, horse and foot, swept out of the town, crossed the bridge and attacked Baudot de Noyelles at Margny. De Flavy, in order to secure the retreat, had lined the ramparts of Compiègne with archers and crossbowmen and put bowmen into a number of boats on the Compiègne side of the river. The attack would have been successful had not Jean de Luxembourg with eight or ten gentlemen been riding at the time from Clairoix to Margny. Jean de Luxembourg, seeing the attack on Baudot from the cliffs above Margny, sent back some of his suite to Clairoix for reinforcements.

Attacked suddenly from Clairoix, the Maid's position became critical. She charged these new forces, seeking to keep open the line of retreat over the causeway. But, judging the position hopeless, her men fled to the boats and bridges. And to complete her discomfiture an English force from La Venette came up and cut her off from Compiègne. She was thus driven off the causeway on to the fields and marshy meadows.

Resistance became futile. All her men had fled save her equerry d'Aulon, her brothers and two or three more. She was speedily sur-

rounded by Burgundians, Picards and Englishmen. An archer dragged her from her horse, and her friends were unable to remount her. She was asked to surrender, but replied, "I have sworn and given my faith to another than you, and I will keep my oath." She hoped to secure death by refusing to surrender. But she was too valuable a prize. The English wanted her; the University of Paris wanted her; the leading ecclesiastics of the Gallican Church wanted her. It is necessary in all ages that the prophets shall be stoned, crucified or burned, in order that afterwards they may be worshipped.

CHAPTER X

THE ECCLESIASTICAL TRIAL AND MARTYRDOM

PIERRE CAUCHON, Bishop of Beauvais, whose name stands high in the long list of infamous ecclesiastics, was the foul instrument by which Joan was betrayed into the hands of the English. He had been expelled from his see by the arms of France, and therefore bore a personal grudge against the Maid. He was commissioned by Bedford to purchase her from Jean de Luxembourg, and this he accomplished for the price of 10,000 livres. She was therefore handed over to the English who, in their turn, handed her over to the Inquisition, with the Bishop of Beauvais as Judge and President of the Court.

Ecclesiastical courts, even at the present day, do not enjoy a reputation for justice or honesty. The first thought of those who compose them is the maintenance of their power and the supremacy of the Church to which they belong. Such an attitude is inimical

to truth and subversive of justice. That Joan would be condemned was a foregone conclusion. The Church desired it; policy demanded it.

Many of the judges were of the Burgundian party; others held benefices in territory belonging to England; a few were French in sympathy, but their fears persuaded them that whatever Cauchon decided concerning the Maid must be right.

Jean de Lohier, a lawyer of Rouen, alone had the courage to speak in her defence. After a consideration of the documents he declared that the trial was not properly conducted. His reasons were:

1. It was held in a castle, where men are not at liberty to express their opinions freely.

2. The honour of the King of France was impeached; yet he did not appear, neither had he any representative.

3. The accusation had not been shown to the Maid, and she was allowed no counsel.

To a friend Lohier expressed his indignation. "You see how they are going on," he said; "they will catch her in her words, as when she says, 'I know for certain that I touched the apparitions.' If she said 'so it

seemed to me,' I think no man could condemn her."

For expressing such an opinion Lohier incurred the anger of Cauchon. Rouen became too hot for him, and shortly afterwards he went for change of air to Rome.

From January to May the mockery of a trial dragged on. Again and again Joan was examined concerning her Saints and her alleged dealings with the fairies. Frequently they tried to trap her, as when they asked, "Do you know that you are in a state of grace?" To say "Yes" would be to make a presumptuous claim; to say "No" would be to condemn herself. Her reply silenced them. "If I am not in grace, may God bring me thither; if I am, God keep me there."

One of her examiners asked if she had ever been present when English blood was shed.

"In God's name, yes," she replied fiercely; and added, "How mildly you talk! Why did they not leave France and go back to their own country?"

Once, when they were examining her, she broke into prophecies which many of her judges lived to see fulfilled. "I know," she said, "that before seven years are passed the English

will lose a greater stake than they did at Orleans" (Paris was lost to them in 1436), "and that they will lose all they hold in France. They will have sorer loss than ever before in France through a great victory given by God to the French." (In 1439, at the Battle of Formigny, Normandy was lost.)

Her direct and simple answers, and the obvious truth that inspired them, are in curious contrast to the ridiculous and crafty interrogations put to her by the lawyers and ecclesiastics. "What have you done with your mandrake?" asked one. And, "Was it right to attack Paris on the Nativity of the Virgin?" asked another. All through her trial she believed in her ultimate victory. It appears that she interpreted the warnings of her Voices in another sense than the one they intended.

"Generally," she told her judges, "the Voices say that I shall be delivered through great victory." But they also said, "Take all things peacefully; heed not thine affliction. Thence thou shalt come at last into the Kingdom of Paradise."

In April an indictment was drawn up consisting of twelve Articles, of which the following is a résumé :

1. She was accused of worshipping her Saints in the neighbourhood of the Fairy Tree.

2. Her reports of the circumstances attending her sign given to the King varied. (In this matter she purposely mystified her examiners, determined at all costs not to betray the secret.)

3. She refused to renounce her belief that her Saints were good.

4. She claimed a foreknowledge of the future.

5. She persisted in wearing male dress. (They suppressed the fact that they made this necessary owing to the conditions of her imprisonment.)

6. She used the motto "Jesus Maria," and claimed to come from God.

7. She persuaded the King that she was a divine emissary.

8. She leaped from the tower of Beaurevoir (after her capture at Compiègne), disobeying her Saints and preferring "to trust her soul to God rather than her body to the English." (Yet her judges had determined that the Saints she disobeyed were powers of evil !)

9. She believed herself as certain of heaven as if she were there already. (This was a travesty of the truth.)

10. She said her Saints did not speak English. This was regarded as an insult to her English

captors. (Her judges apparently forgot that she would not have understood them if they had.)

11. She adored her Saints without taking clerical advice. (Clerics have always enjoyed a reputation for differing on points of doctrine. Yet her judges did not state which clerics she ought to have consulted.)

12. She refused to submit her conduct and revelations to the Church. (But she was denied an appeal to the Council of Basle and to the Pope.)

Yet, even with this document in their hands, her tormentors were not satisfied. On May 9th she was brought into a chamber wherein stood the instruments of torture. They showed her the racks, screws and other devices, and then bade her give the replies they desired.

“Truly,” she replied, “if you tear me limb from limb, till my soul is forced from my body, I will say no other thing than I have said. And if I do, I will always declare that you dragged it from me by force.”

They therefore abandoned the attempt.

Did Joan abjure when the ordeal by fire was very near to her? There is some uncertainty among authorities on this point. The facts appear to be as follows :

She was taken to the Market Place at Rouen and there set upon a platform within sight of the stake and the faggots. A sermon was preached to her and a paper was thrust into her hand. She was told she had only to make her mark to save herself from the flames. Thereupon, with a strange smile on her face, she made a round O at the foot of the paper. This, she was told, would not do. She thereupon made a cross.

Apparently they tried to cheat her, for the paper she signed consisted of only two or three lines, whereas the recantation finally produced was a long document. What therefore she "recanted" it is impossible to say. Probably she did not know and did not care, persuaded that her death by fire was now inevitable.

If she recanted, her recantation was of short duration, for on May 28th she is recorded to have said, "God told me, through St. Catharine and St. Margaret, of the great pity of the treason to which I consented when I made that abjuration and revocation to save my life. . . . My Voices have told me since that I greatly sinned in that deed, in confessing that I had done ill. What I said, I said in fear of fire."

On Wednesday, May 31st, she was taken to the Market Place again. There she was bound and tied to the stake. Twice her voice was heard from out the smoke. Once it said, "My Voices were of God; they have not deceived me." And, a little later, "Jesus."

CHAPTER XI

THE TRIAL OF REHABILITATION

THE victorious campaign initiated by Joan of Arc was not stayed at her death. It was impossible for the English invaders to recover from the blow she had dealt them. The tide of invasion receded. The realm of France expanded and grew rich by industry and commerce. On November 10th, 1449, Charles VII resumed possession of his town of Rouen. There was no serious opposition ; the burghers were easily won over by the grant of certain rights and privileges. In 1451 Maine, Normandy and Aquitaine returned to their allegiance.

The chief difficulties of King Charles were at an end. Victory and prosperity had come to him without his seeking them. There was only one thing lacking in the cup of his content. He was troubled by the stain cast on his reputation by the condemnation of the Maid in 1431. Even the most prosperous of kings does not like it to be whispered that he was

delivered from his difficulties and conducted to his coronation by a witch.

It seemed desirable to him therefore to appeal against the sentence passed on the Maid. Such a proceeding was difficult. Judgment had been pronounced by the Church, and the Pope alone had power to cancel it.

Nicholas V found himself in a difficult position. Charles VII urged him to initiate an inquiry. But to please France in the matter would be to displease England. Moreover, Nicholas did not wish it to be thought that the tribunal of the Most Holy Inquisition was fallible. It had been necessary that Joan should be burnt ; it was equally necessary that if any whitewashing was to be done the Church and the Inquisition should not suffer in the process.

At this juncture the Government of Charles VII came to the rescue. In order to save the Pope from his embarrassment it was arranged that the King should not appear in the suit. The second trial was to be instituted by the family of the Maid. By a legal artifice the case was converted from a political into a private suit. Isabelle Romée de Vouthon and her two sons Pierre and Jean, were represented as demanding the revision.

On March 25th, 1455, Nicholas V died, and

his successor, Calixtus III, authorised the institution of proceedings. They were to be held under the presidency of the Grand Inquisitor of France, assisted by Jean Jouvenel des Ursins, Archbishop of Reims, Guillaume Charier, Bishop of Paris, and Richard Olivier, Bishop of Coutances.

The object of the trial of 1431 was to prove the Maid a witch ; the object of the trial of 1450 was to prove she was a saint. No rudimentary idea of " justice " entered into either trial. In each there was an imposing display of learning, but no attempt to sift truth from falsehood.

The chief obstacle in the way of the trial of 1450 was the finding of a suitable scapegoat. The University of Paris had to be protected. So had many eminent men who, it was suddenly discovered, " had been deceived." Who had deceived them and what they had been deceived about was not clearly stated. And doubtless the eminent men themselves were not eager to be enlightened. Alike in legal procedure and in theological dogma there is oftentimes virtue in vagueness.

A living scapegoat is undoubtedly useful, but a dead scapegoat is decidedly better. It was agreed, therefore, that the whole responsibility

for the proceedings of 1431 should be thrown on Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais, and the spy and promoter of the original trial, Guillaume d'Estivet, who were both deceased.

On November 7th, 1455, a procession of ecclesiastics and laymen, headed by Isabelle Romée and her two sons, approached the church of Notre Dame in Paris to demand "justice" from the prelates and papal commissioners.

Of the informers and accusers of Joan summoned to appear at Rouen on December 12th, none came. The heirs of Cauchon disclaimed all liability for the deeds and misdeeds of their kinsman, and the proceedings went forward without hindrance.

Inquiries were held at Domremy, at Orleans, at Paris and at Rouen. The friends of Joan's childhood were interrogated, the children who had romped and played with her in those far-away days round the Fairy Tree; Perrin, the bell-ringer at the village church; Lassois, Joan's uncle, and many others.

Burgesses of Orleans were called to give evidence; among them was Jean Luillier, the draper who, in 1429, had furnished Brussels cloth for Joan's gown. Evidence was repeated and repeated, but very little new information concerning her career was gleaned.

Care was taken not to summon Jean Lemaistre, Vice-Inquisitor of Religion, who had shared Cauchon's judicial duties in 1431. Although he was living, no word was said concerning him. Certain of the assessors of 1431 were called, but they behaved admirably. The zeal they had displayed in their efforts to convict Joan was only equalled by their zeal in discovering that they ought never to have convicted her.

On June 16th, 1455, the sentence of 1431 was declared unjust, unfounded and iniquitous. It was nullified and pronounced invalid. The most learned men of the day had decided that Charles VII had been led to his coronation, not by a witch, but by a messenger from heaven.

CHAPTER XII

JOAN'S PLACE AMONG THE MYSTICS

RELIGIONISTS and scientists have sought to pierce the mists of the realm in which Joan of Arc moved, and to "explain" her in terms of doctrine and of science. And always they have failed. For ever she remains a baffling figure. Her girlish form flits across the uncouth landscape of the fifteenth century, fresh with the dews of morning and splendid in the sunshine of courage and of truth.

During her lifetime and afterwards a legend grew up, as was inevitable, and thus what was dim before in the wonder of accomplishment became even more dim in the wonder of romance.

Primitive folk delight in fairy tales, and even while Joan lived she became a worker of miracles, a slayer of giants and a mover of mountains. Thus it was told how, at the capitulation of Troyes, on the coming of the Maid, the townsfolk beheld from their ramparts an innumerable company of men-at-arms, each man bearing a white pennon in his hand. And

how these heavenly knights vanished like the mists of morning when the King had gone.

Legendary stories were invented and passed from mouth to mouth concerning her childhood. It was said that at her birth the shepherds watching their flocks were moved by an irresistible impulse of joy to visit the new-born babe; the cocks crowed all night long, and there were portents in the heavens.

Each age tends to see its own hopes and beliefs reflected in its heroes, and to interpret their words and actions in terms that accord with its own preconceptions. The fifteenth century suffered from an exaggerated credulity; and the Church was careful to foster this useful quality. Thus it happened that while she lived many powers were ascribed to Joan that she neither possessed nor claimed.

With the passing of medievalism and the birth of the more self-assured age of science and industrialism, the pendulum swung the other way, and many held the Maid for an impostor because she claimed to hear Voices and to see Visions.

Our own age is more enlightened concerning the things of the spirit. We are no longer content to look at the world through the dusty spectacles of complacent theologians or

didactic scientists. Owing to the impartial investigation of spiritistic and psychic phenomena, man's intellectual horizon has been widened and his sympathies extended. Science, confronted by problems of abnormal psychology, has found it necessary to suspend judgment. Men of scientific training and attainment have demonstrated to all but the blindly prejudiced that there is a substance subtler than matter as we know it, and a power more strangely baffling and elusive than any known force whose residence is the mind and the will. Boirac has proved that materialisations do take place, and Filmer has shown by means of the dicyanin screen that the aura is something more than a legend. And in face of these experiments science is compelled to adopt the attitude from which she ought never to have departed—the attitude of observation, classification and suspended judgment.

It is possible therefore, in the light of present-day knowledge and research, to approach the many problems presented by a life so strange as that of Joan of Arc with more assurance of understanding than has been possible hitherto.

We see in her a type of the true mystic. Yet to say that is to say little. Again and again

the riddle has been propounded, "What is a mystic?"

Many definitions have been offered, none of them satisfactory. For behind all definitions lies the baffling reality itself. Wherever there is life, there is always the supreme difficulty of analysing, of knowing, of understanding.

The derivation of the term helps us a little. It derives from the Greek *μύειν*, to close the eyes, and also, to be initiated. In Joan of Arc we see a vivid illustration of the mystic temperament "moving about in worlds not realised." For her, this world of sense was a secondary consideration; the things of the spirit and the life which is behind life as we know it, came first. Voices spoke to her from the Beyond, and the sights and sounds of earth became of small significance in comparison. Her Saints came and bade her do certain things, and all else was thrust aside in her determination to carry out the commands of the Shining Ones.

It is popularly imagined that the mystic temperament is in its nature unpractical and incapable of carrying great enterprises to success. Such a belief by no means squares with the facts. St. Francis touches the dry bones of the medieval Church and makes them

live. He founds an Order, and the minutest details of its organisation are not too small for his attention. Joan of Arc receives the command to drive out the English and to crown her King at Reims. With calm discretion and practical ability she carries out these commands. She could play the parts of warrior, politician and woman whenever she pleased, and play each to perfection.

Did Joan of Arc work miracles? There is a fantastic belief abroad to-day that doctrines can be proved true by works of healing. The holders of such a belief can find no support for their teaching in the life of the Maid. On several occasions she disclaimed any special gift of healing.

Before setting out for Chinon from Vaucouleurs in February 1429, Joan had paid a visit, at his urgent request, to the old Duke Charles of Lorraine. The Duke was in failing health. He did not enjoy a good reputation. Having driven out his lawful wife, Dame Marguerite of Bavaria, he had taken Alison du Mai, a priest's daughter, for his mistress. But, as far as his bodily health was concerned, he gained nothing from Joan's visit. "The Duke put questions to her about the recovery of his health, concerning which, as she informed him,

she knew nothing ; but she told him a few things about her journey." She also improved the occasion by warning him that his ways were evil and that he would be well advised to send away Alison and take back his wife. " Give me your son," she said, " with men-at-arms, as my escort. In return I will pray to God for your restoration to health."

That Joan possessed the faculty of second sight and telepathy there is no reason to doubt. There is abundance of historical material to prove that she exercised these gifts on several occasions. She informed Robert de Baudricourt on February 12th, 1429, of the disaster that had befallen the Royal forces at Rouvray in the Battle of the Herrings. The King's secret is another case in point. That she read the King's mind, or had it revealed to her by her Saints, is the only reasonable solution of the incident. Her discovery of the buried sword at Fierbois is another instance of this power. " These things," says the historian Quicherat, " rest on bases of evidence so solid that we cannot reject them without rejecting the very foundation of history."

Yet it is not from such gifts as these, which many possess, that the true splendour of the Maid's career springs. Personal character is,

and always will be, the living equation which determines events. At seventeen Napoleon had not won a battle, yet the Maid was between seventeen and eighteen when she turned the tide of war against the English invaders. What she accomplished she accomplished without external aid or encouragement. Her friends and relations at Domremy did not believe in her Voices. Her father was strongly opposed to her leaving home on what must have appeared to him a crazy quest.

The "gentle Dauphin," for whom she showed such unswerving loyalty and devotion, was incapable of understanding the fine enthusiasm which swept her on from victory to victory. He was lazy, he was stupid, he had just enough kindness of heart to permit himself to be crowned, but not enough to save the girl who crowned him from the stake. By her courage, her determination, her practical ability and her inspired belief in the unseen, she gained a victory at which the world still marvels.

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